

SENATE RESOLUTION 183
By Norris

A RESOLUTION to join with the owners, management and staff of WKBL AM in celebrating the station's 50th anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to recognize those estimable organizations and individuals who have made significant contributions to the cultural fabric of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, WKBL AM is one such laudable institution that has brought great fame and honor to this state during its fifty years of broadcasting excellence; and

WHEREAS, on August 16, 1954, the station signed on for the first time after acquiring its license from the Federal Communications Commission; the call letters "WKBL" were derived from the first initials of Ken Sparks and Bill and Louise Hoffman, the original owners of the station, who did business as Tipton County Broadcasting Company; and

WHEREAS, Robert C. Whiteley, Jr., and Katharine C. Whiteley of Tipton County Broadcasters acquired the station in 1957; they would operate it with acumen and alacrity for a quarter of a century, until 1982; and

WHEREAS, when the Whiteley's purchased the station, a primary source of radio revenue was live programming, with a significant focus on religious programming; WKBL broadcast ministers and gospel singers throughout the week; and

WHEREAS, much of the programming was arranged by Lawrence Hall, who was one of the first voices ever heard on the station; noted for his unusual laugh on the radio, he can still be heard on the station during his fifteen-minute program on Friday morning, his three-hour show on Saturday morning, and a three and one half-hour program on Sundays; and

WHEREAS, other DJs who have entertained the people of Tipton County throughout the years include Jerry Butler, Bob Bromley, Lynn Huggins, George Klein, Bill Thomas, Danny Archer, Dennis Black, and Dave Stuart; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, Royce Wilson, who had been an employee of the Whiteleys since 1970, acquired WKBL; under his leadership, the studios moved from the old Roper Drug Building to the transmitter site on Highway 51 North, greatly reducing the overhead costs from the use of telephone lines; and

WHEREAS, in 1999, Mr. Wilson sold WKBL AM and sister station WKBL FM to Bob Lakey, Jerol Hopkins, Keith Phelps, and Sammy Beasley, the owners of KBJ TV, doing business as Covington Broadcasting, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, since the transfer was completed on April 1, 1999, these four men have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to upgrade the station's facilities to include state of the art equipment and computer automation and to ensure that the people of Tipton County continue to benefit from having an outstanding radio station in their community for many years to come; and

WHEREAS, with a nod to their historic past, the management of WKBL has maintained the classic country programming that has been consistently broadcast throughout the station's history; over the years, the listeners of WKBL AM have also enjoyed numerous charitable talk-a-thons and live broadcasts of sports events such as University of Tennessee Football, the Tennessee Titans, University of Tennessee Basketball, and St. Louis Cardinals Baseball; and

WHEREAS, through their prodigious service, the management and employees of WKBL, both past and present, have contributed significantly to the growth and prosperity of Tipton County; and

WHEREAS, as the years have passed, WKBL's location and technology have changed, but the station has never lost sight of its roots; and

WHEREAS, throughout the station's existence, WKBL's management has ensured that the station's contributions to society reach much further than merely delivering entertainment; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud WKBL AM and its praiseworthy management and employees for their countless contributions to the entertainment and communications industries, Tipton County, and the Volunteer State; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we hereby honor and commend the owners, management and staff of WKBL AM, both past and present, for their invaluable contributions to Tipton County and this State and join with them in celebrating the station's 50th anniversary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we extend to these exceptional professionals our best wishes in all future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.